The Impact of Video Games in the Acquisition of English Language: The Case of Saudi Youths

Alawi A. Al- jifri (godsnobleknight@gmail.com)
English Language Institute, King Abdulaziz University

Tariq Elyas (telyas@kau.edu.sa)
European Languages Department, King Abdulaziz University

Abstract: Over the last few decades, teaching English has become a phenomenon in Saudi Arabia, especially to young learners. English is taught as a main subject in kindergarten and elementary schools. Like any other children, Saudis accept new foreign languages easily, but they get bored very quickly if the teacher teaches them using the old conventional methods and techniques. The aim of this paper is to highlight that games are effective tools when devised to explain vocabularies and they make it easier to remember their meanings. This paper deals with a literature review of teaching English vocabulary to young learners using games. Then it discusses the importance of using games in teaching vocabulary and in what way using them is helpful. After that it investigates the practical implications of using games to teach vocabulary that includes the implementation of vocabulary games and some examples of games that could be used to teach vocabulary to children. And finally it examines challenges teachers face when teaching vocabulary using games to young learners.

Keywords: young learners, games, vocabulary, practical challenges, practical implications

Introduction

Since the dawn of the twentieth century, the world witnessed the greatest breakthroughs in the different fields of science. The human revolution against the nature of the world went through a number of phases. It started with the agricultural

revolution (Diamond, 1997), followed by the industrial revolution and culminated in the form of the informational revolution. With the introduction of information technology and the invention of computers, humanity paved new ways to enhance itself in different areas of social, natural and scientific fields such as entertainment, engineering and medicine, just to name a few. Entertainment via technology took on different forms, from audible to visual manifestations, with video games following those trends of leisure enjoyment after the birth of the computer. The main idea of video games was playing in a virtual environment presented through two dimensional graphics that are primitive and outdated compared to the highly advanced games of recent years. The common stereotype among the people is that video games are made for "entertainment" only (Shaffer, Halverson, Squire, & Gee, 2005), although this may apply to "old school" video games, the case is entirely different nowadays with the embedment of different elements such as realistic imagery, compelling storylines, sophisticated gameplay systems, simulation of social interactivity and etc. These elements play their role in involving the gamer in learning and acquiring different sorts of knowledge at the same time in a semi- authentic context, and in a non- systematic way, promoting the autonomy of learning (Holec, 1981, as cited in Chik, 2014). One of the aspects of knowledge gained from video games is second language learning and acquisition, and this is the axis around which this research paper revolves.

Statement of the Problem

The impact video games have on video gamer's second language, and the ways and methods they adopt in acquiring the language through video games as well as whether or not they are natural.

Significance of the Topic

Video games in the field of learning and language learning has been in the spotlight in the past few decades. These digital worlds that blend fantasy with reality gave the players an infinite access to different kinds of knowledge. Video games and language

learning research papers are available at a high proportion, with many empirical ones that studied the matter scientifically, even though when juxtaposed against other areas of language research the case might be different. But this area of language and technology is so limited in the Middle East where the topic was not heeded until recently, e.g. (Turgut & Irgin, 2008). In the Saudi context, the phenomenon of using video games as a means of learning is quite rare, and only a few reflective articles as well as online blogs such as (Maarik, 2012) or (Shammary, 2012) were written to discuss video gaming potentials in learning efficacy, and it is a golden opportunity for this paper, in the context of Saudi Arabia, to explore the aspects of video gaming in the field of English language acquisition, and research it empirically in the hopes of developing a new method in language teaching using video games. The factors of play and game have always been part of nature, humans were not around when playing was, and here, it is feasible to quote Huizinga (1950, p.1, as cited in Stanley & Mawer, 2008) in highlighting the significance of play against culture:

> *Play is older than culture, for culture, however inadequately defined, always presupposes human society, and animals have not waited for man to teach them their playing. We can safely assert, even, that human civilization has added no essential feature to the general idea of play.*

Purpose of the Research

This paper intends to conduct a research to explore the impact of video games on the acquisition of the English language of five young male- adults in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, who command an advanced level of English, associating it to the constant exposure to video games, what ways and methods did they use to understand the language, that is English, and to understand whether these individuals mastered the language via video games naturally or systematically.

Research Questions

This research paper has three questions to address, and they are as follows:

1) How did video games impact English as a second language of five male Saudi video gamers?
2) What ways and methods did these Saudi individuals, as video gamers, adopt to acquire the second language while playing video games?
3) Are these ways and methods natural or systematic?

Literature Review

Video Games' Significance in Learning

It is undeniable that those video games have become an inseparable part of children and adults' leisure- time activities, and that they have become their virtual world where they find themselves taking the roles of different identities and learning different skills (Shaffer, Halverson, Squire, & Gee, 2005). Individuals who play these games are in reality involved in a strenuous process to solve puzzles, defeat enemies, reach new levels and reach the game's end. It is a challenge between the player and the game itself. Gee (2005) alleges that learning by doing, in an entertaining fashion, is more effective than simply acquiring the facts without practicing them, and video games actually involve the gamer in practicing certain skills in order to reach new horizons in the game while the gamer's enjoyment is at its hights. In a semi- ethnographic study carried out by Steinkuehler (2010) on a young adult student known by his online nick-name "Julio", it was found that Julio's digital reading literacy acquired from video games, and video game fan- based online sites was as high as that of advanced- level reading texts, and that Julio tends to loose interest and achieve lower marks in conventional advanced reading exams, because he is not involved in a computer game. Thorne, Black and Sykes (2014) posited that learning a second language in school is confined by the settings of the school itself, limiting the breadth of language use, and that online gaming with its online communities provide a greater opportunity to learn, acquire and practicing the second language.

Video Games & Language Learning From an Empirical View

Numerous researches were conducted to examine and scientifically explore the impact of video games on language learning. According to Chik (2014) after researching the effects of commercial video games and their associate online communities on a sample of 153 Chinese undergraduates with a medium English level using various data instruments from stimulous recall to individual interview sessions, the research's findings concluded that video games enhance learner's autonomy and provide the learner with a variety of ways to practice the second language within and without the video game (Chik, 2014). Reinders and Wattana (2014) confirmed that while the 30 Thai students they interviewed and presented them to a pre- gaming questionnaire, initially showed a lack in willingness to communicate and poor linguistic command, they significantly overcame these boundries after playing an online video game that enabled them to establish textual as well as oral communications with other gamers as shown by the post- gaming questionnaire and interviews. Another study (Peterson, 2011) observed seven adult female Japanese EFL students playing a massive multi- player online role playing game (MMORPG) with four of them being beginners in that game and the other three relatively experienced. The study asserted that the four beginners suffered from second language command problems, and poor communication skills at first, but the difficulties dissipated as they gradually immersed themselves in the game. The experienced individuals projected instant engagement through the second language and ease of command in their interaction with other players. Both groups adopted distinct learning strategies and returned positive feedback after a post-interview and using discourse analysis (DA) as a primary source to understand the textual communications among the participants. Although the majority of the video games- related language learning studies relied heavily on conventional research instruments, e.g. pre/ post- interviews, observations, questionnaires and etc, in another study, conversational analysis (CA) was the foundational tool utilized in understanding the interaction between a number of Finnish teenagers, who were playing a role playing game (RPG) called Final Fantasy 10, by Marsh and Tainio. The analysis of the teenagers'

conversation among themselves and interaction with the game showed that they tended to use other- repetition as resource of participation in the video game, and led them to master different features of the game's language- English (Piirainen-Marsh & Tainio, 2009).

Despite the fact that the majority of these empirical studies crystalized the effect of video games, and espicially the modern online- based ones, on the learning of the second language, a study that was written and conducted by deHaan, Reed and Kuwada (2010), indicated that video gamers tended to be distracted from learning vocabularies while playing a music video game with 80 female adult undergraduates devided into groups of 2 where one individual plays the game and the other watches. It turned out that the individuals who kept watching the game actually managed to acquire a greater number of new words as opposed to the players, who were under a potential cognitive load (deHaan et al., 2010) while playing the game. It also showed, after conducting a vocabulary- recall test two weeks after the gameplay, that both the players and watchers forgot a significant number of vocabularies pertaining to the game in question. This paper in particular could be criticized for using a music- based video game where the gamer is most concerned with physical choreographic activities as well as repetition of song lyrics at the same time which actually affect the gamer's language learning chances. It should also be noted that most games that caught the interest of the other studies were MMORPGs, where the games are more often story- driven, require language- based communication in the form of text or vocal ones as well as interactivity with members of online forums related to the MMORPGs as indicators of authentic contexts of language use, while choreography or any other physical activities are non-existent in those games.

Krashen's Theory of Second Language Acquisition

Also known as Krashen's Monitor Model.In the late 70s, Krashen presented in a series of articles the aspects of his theory, which he later on expanded it into a series of books

during the early years of the 80s (Mitchell & Myles, 2004, p.44). The theory is based on five main hypotheses. The first hypothesis is the Acquisition- Learning hypothesis. The idea of this hypothesis is that a difference between learning and acquisition exists. Language acquisition occurs in a naturalistic environment whereas language learning occurs in classroom environment. The second hypothesis is the Monitor hypothesis. This hypothesis is concerned with the second language user's monitoring of his/ her spoken language. Monitoring happens when the language is learned, not acquired, and people who usually prioritize fluency over accuracy have a lower monitoring activity. The third hypothesis is the Natural Order hypothesis. The Natural Order hypothesis is basically, as Krashen (1985, p. 1, as cited in Mitchell & Myles, 2004 p. 47) puts it:

> *We acquire the rules of language in a predictable order, some rules tending to come early and others late. The order does not appear to be determined solely by formal simplicity and there is evidence that it is independent of the order in which rules are taught in language classes.*

The Input hypothesis comes next in line. This hypothesis is associated to the Natural Order hypothesis in the sense that we as language learners acquire the language either by understanding verbal messages or receiving *comprehensible input* (Johnson, 2004, p. 57). The essense of this hypothesis is that it occurs along a developmental continuum known as *i+1*. i is the previous input we already possess of the language and +1 is the new input. The input increases gradually from i+1 to i+2 to i+3 and so on (Mitchell & Myles, 2004, pp. 47- 48). The final hypothesis is the Affective Filter Hypothesis. The Affective Filter Hypothesis is the notion that a language learner's mind has supposedly a filtering device that when active, due to learning anxiety such as fear for example, the input received by the learner will not be settled in his/ her mind as a result of a highly active filter. The lower the filtering of the input is, the higher the learning of the language input and vice versa. According to Krashen (1982, p. 31 as cited in Mitchell & Myles, 2004, p. 48):

> *The Affective Filter Hypothesis captures the relationship between affective variables and the process of second language acquisition by positing that acquirers vary with respect to the strength or level of their affective filters. Those whose attitudes are not optimal for second language acquisition will not only tend to seek less input, but they will also have a high or strong affective filter- even if they understand the message, the input will not reach that part of the brain responsible for language acquisition, or the language acquisition device. Those with attitudes more conducive to second language acquisition will not only seek and gain more input, they will also have a lower or weaker filter. They will be more open to the input, and will strike 'deeper'.*

Nevertheless, Krashen's Monitor Theory was criticized for being vague, inaccurate and difficult to empirically measure or understand. Johnson (2004, p.49), Mitchell & Myles (2004, pp. 45- 49) and others cited in the aforementioned references enumerated their arguments on how the Monitor Model, or the Input Theory is not viable in the classroom due to the lack of concrete data that prove, for example, whether the learner's filter while receiving comprehensible input is indeed active or not. This paper will attempt to base video gamers' experiences with video games in mastering English on Krashen's Theory.

The Gap, the Hypothetical & Theoretical Framework

There is an unequivocal agreement among the studies reviewed above that video games are indeed an effective way to assist one in learning the language. It is also a fact that the current wave of researches in this particular area intend to deduce or induce an entertaining factor, that is video games, from and into the second language classroom so as to motivate learners' willingnness to master the second tongue. However, the ends justify the means, and if learners develop the awareness that video games are being used in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom, for example, for the sake of learning specifically, the motives for a natural mastery of the second language will

diminsih. This research paper is concerned with language acquisition, not language learning. Language acquisition is spontaneous, but language learning is methodological (Krashen, 1982). Hypothetically speaking, video gamers are playing video games for the sake of entertainment, first and foremost. This means that their motive to progress in the game, albeit, in the case of Saudi gamers, the game's language is foreign, is exceptionally high, taking into account Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis, that their filter while being exposed to the target language, English in most cases (Chik, 2014), is low. In addition, computer gameplay is a continuous process. Gamers usually spend several ours per day interacting with their favorite console games, and this means the language's input is also continuous (Krashen, 1982), resulting in a non- stop exposure to the target language.

Krashen's Monitor Theory of SLA (1982) will form the theoretical bases of this research paper. The Acquisition- Learning Hypothesis, the Input Hypothesis and the Affective Filter Hypothesis will be the principia used to gain an understanding of how the participants acquired the English language while playing video games.

Methodology

Research Method

This is a qualitative research paper, and it is constructed using the interpretive paradigm. The methods are based on previously used data collection- instruments of other topic- related papers. The research paper will rely on two main instruments for data collection. One is the usage of interviews. Sorensen, Holm and Mayer (2007) used interviews with children to acquire data from the children's experience with Serious Games- produced video games for educational purposes. The interviews and focus group discussion will be used to shed light on the impact of video games on English as a second language's acquisition as well as the ways and methods the participants used in acquiring the second language while playing the video game. The data will be accumulated via these tools using smart social network applications. It was deemed

wise to make use of the *Whatsapp* application for mobile phones and smart tablets to collect necessary information about video games and second language acquisition by forming an online group specifically assembled for both interviewing the participants as a group and individuals.

Research Instrumnets

Interviewing the participants using an online social network application is utilized by using *Whatsapp*. *Whatsapp* is the research's choice of data collection- tool. The application is used to assemble a group consisting of five participants who are 'hardcore' video gamers, and exceptionally good second language users. The researcher used the questions to gain information from the participants as both a group and as individuals. The questions ranged from general, video game- related questions to English language learning experience and video games as an 'inadvertent' tool that assisted them in mastering English.

Participants

The participants are five Saudi males working for the English Language Institute at King AbdulAziz University. Four are teaching assistants in their late twenties, and one is a lecturer in his early thirties. All five command an advanced level of English in all four language skills as well as a good expertise in language teaching. They were approached and chosen for their keen interest in console or "commercial" video games since their childhood, and all of them concurrently agree that video games had the primal effect in developing as well as refining their second language use.

Data Collection

The participants were brought together as a group in a famous smart phone/ tablet social network application called *Whatsapp.* They were presented to the nature of the topic, and were told of the purpose of conducting this study, and after gaining their consent, they were presented to a couple of initiating questions about their history with

video games, and why they became obsessed with them. To keep the privacy of those participants maintained, their names will not be disclosed, but they will be referred to usign their first name- initials and a serial number as a reference code.

The participants are A1, 27 years, a teaching assistant at ELI, KAU. K1, 26 years old, a teaching assistant at ELI, KAU. H1, 27 years, a teaching assistant at ELI, KAU. A2, 27 years, a teaching assistant at ELI, KAU, and S1, 34 years, a language instructor at ELI, KAU.

The questions were presented in graded fashion. In other words, the first group of questions explored the participants' background with video games, the second group was about their experiences with learning English at school, the third group drew info from the partcipants about the games that prompted the participants, or forced them, to use English, the fourth group created a scope about the ways the participants used to understand the game's language, the fifth group approached the usage of educational video games, the other questions garnered answers from the participants about the reasons educational video games are not as popular as commercial ones, some insight about MMORPG and the use of English, garnering info about video game- related complementaries and recommendations for making a successful English language-learning specific- video game.

Data Analysis

The data collected from the online focus group/ individual interview is segmented into three main pillars based on the principles of three out of five hypotheses that constitute the theory of Krashen's Monitor Model or Theory of SLA. The three hypotheses chosen and on which the analysis of the interview data is based are the Acqusition- Learning hypothesis, the Input hypothesis and the Affective Filter hypothesis. What follows are interpretations and implications of the data provided by the participants who acquired the English language via video games.

The Acquisition- Learning Hypothesis

Krashen (1982, as cited by Mitchell & Myles, 2004) elaborated on the difference between acquisition and learning, and that is acquisition is a natural process, while learning is classroom- governed. Any kind of natural mastery of a skill (and language is a construction of different skills) stems from a need growing inside the individual. A need to enact something in order to achieve something of a greater importance, that is, in this paper's own wording, the essence of motivation. Motivation is defined by Cherry (2013) as:

> *… the process that initiates, guides, and maintains goal- oriented behaviors. Motivation is what causes us to act, whether it is getting a glass of water to reduce thirst or reading a book to gain knowledge.*

Drawing on Cherry's definition of motivation, it is unequivocal that all participants agree on the fact that they played and still play video games today for an intrinsic need. When asked about the reason they started palying video games, S1, H1 and A1 agree that "killing time" was a major reason that initiated them to play video games, and H1 as well as A1 added that they wanted to have "fun". A2 said that "getting a PlayStation is much easier than travelling to Disney land", meaning that access to sources of fun and entertainment were limited during their childhood, and video games compensated for that lack of entertainment- resources. All participants started their video game spree in the late 1990s, while S1 started in the late 1980s. This means that their interaction with video games came a long way, and their interaction with the second language, English, occurred at the same time they played their first video game, since the majority of those commercial off- the- shelf (COTS) video games were presented in English (Chik, 2014, p. 85).

So two major factors worked as an impetus to play video games. The amplitude of time, and the fun factor. In order to fulfill these two ultimate goals, the gamers face numerous obstacles from defeating enemies to solving riddles and puzzles, and while they are in

the process of defeating an enemy, for example, instructions are being given to them in English to do so. Solving a mystery or a riddle involve a lot of critical thinking and constant exposure to English, that is the means of communication in the majority of video games of past and present. While the gamers are playing the game, they read a conversation between the characters of the game, such is the case with Role Playing Games (RPG), or hear it via voice- overs (action games, football, etc.). For people who do not speak English as their mother tongue, hearnig and understanding the game is a daunting feat, but people such as K1, used to hold a note book and a dictionary near him, and whenever a new word or expression is read or heard in the game, he will refer back to the dictionary, write down the meaning in his note book and carry on with the game. A1 said that he usually tries to guess the meaning of the new word from the context, which, according to him, "worked like a charm", where it was mentioned or, like K1, refer to a dictionary. In both cases, referring to a dictionary or guessing word meaning, the player is completely involved with English, in terms of thinking, guessing and responding, and are improvising their own techniques in understanding the language, while all of this is happening without an extrinsic effect or motivation being put on the player.

It is clear then, that the interaction with the game's language is stemming from a natural, and ungoverned motives inside the player's mind that is pushing him to learn the language as a means to achieve an end, and that end is the "euphoric" feel a palyer savors after completing the game or defeating an enemy.

The process can be summarized in the following diagram:

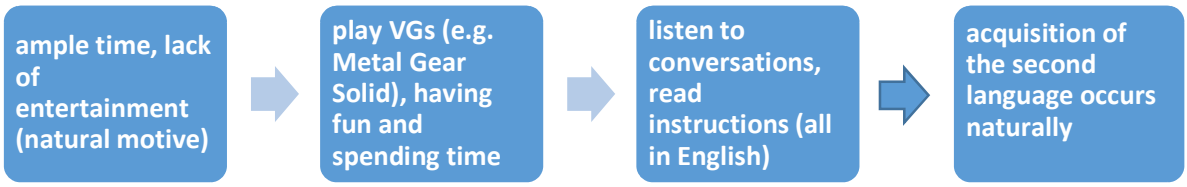

Figure 1. Video Games and Language Motives.

The Input Hypothesis

This is the core of Krashen's theory and after which his theory was named. The Input Hypothesis is heavily reliant on what Krashen (1982) called *comprehensive input*. Comprehensive input refers to the amount of linguistic addition of the second language on the learner's current linguistic state. Krashen used the *i+1* symbol to explain the learner's current input "i" , and the new one "+1". The more the learner's input of the second tongue expands, the greater the number is, i.e. moving from +1 to +2 to +3 and etc.

Two other notions were associated to this hypothesis (Mitchell & Myles, 2004, p.165):

- First, when a learner starts speaking the language, this means speaking is the outcome of the input, and not a cause.
- Second, if the input is comprehended and enough amount of linguistic data is provided, the learner will naturally acquire the necessary grammar.

After warming up the discussion with the video gamers, a question regarding their experience with English prior to their confrontation with it via video games showed a slight contrast in their responses. They were asked about how well did their English develop while taking classes at school. S1 said that English classes were "good to a degree", while A1, H1, A2 and K1 agreed that the classes were "below average" or even "secondary". K1 agreed with the rest that the teachers did not provide them with enough English (i.e. input), but the books were helpful. That was the case with them during their primary school days, but the situation drastically changed when they started playing video games that were story- driven and required deep thinking to stratigically defeat enemies or solve mysteries. A1 and H1 concurred that by the time they reached intermediate school, they were able to mark their peers' English home works instead of the teacher, since their constant exposition to a substantial amount of comprehensible input triggered their second language acquisition. These phenomena lead to the following conclusions:

- Teachers in both primary and intermediate schools did not present their English classes using English as the medium of communication at least for the majority of the class's duration. This is due to their limited mastery of the language, as A2 alleged that "Quite honestly teachers were trying their best to push themselves to use english the entire class but they were under- qualafied to say the least".
- Even though the textbooks were all written in English, the problem solving, grammar teaching and vocabulary explanation occurred in Arabic (the mother tongue), with the comprehensive input being almost static, and linguistic development followed a slow pace. K1 claimed that "the books helped. Teachers? Not so much. I've always felt that I was better than my teachers".
- Due to the constant exposure to the content of story- driven games such as *Metal Gear Solid* (Konami, 1998), *Grand Theft Auto* (Rockstar Games, 2002) *or Chrono Cross* (Squaresoft, 2000) at an early stage of the gamer's cognitive development, at the age of 10 in the case of K1 who played such games in the late 1990s early 2000s, the gamers were able to self- educate themselves in the realm of language learning without following a systematic method in doing so. A2 added that "I'm self educated to some extent".

The gamers did not only play a specific game once and went to another one after finishing it, rather, some of them, H1 in particular, claimed that he played and completed a survival horror game, *Silent Hill* (Konami, 1999), seven times since he first had the chance to play it. This means that when the game is entertaining in terms of atmosphere, gameplay, story and other game features, the player will find himself compelled to play it again to "re- live" the experience again. Here, the *i+1* hypothesis gains the highest prominence. When the gamers start playing their new video game, they need to familiarize themselves with the characters, the setting and the world in that game, for example. This familiarization includes knowing the characters' names, the history of their world, and the mysteries they are going to solve. As they progress in the game, their second language starts developing via reading texts, such as the

conversations in Chrono Cross (Squaresoft, 2000), or vocal dialogues in Metal Gear Solid (Konami, 1998). These texts and dialogues serve crucial elements in the games such as finding a specific item, receiving story- developing information, instructions about a new mission and ideas about an enemy's weak points in order to defeat it. The first time they experience and receive such information, linguistic input is naturally acquired in simple forms, such as names of vaccines (Resident Evil, 1996) or different types of weapons (Metal Gear Solid, 1998) or even exposition to literary custom plays of Shakespearean nature, such as the one in Chrono Chross (Squaresoft, 2000), where the shakespearean language is used to deliver the play. This initial input will not be necessarily understood from the first time. However, in the case of H1 who played Silent Hill (Konami, 1999) seven times, A1 who finished Resident Evil (Capcom, 1996) ten times or K1 who completed Chrono Cross (Squaresoft, 2000) several times, the comprehensive input is incrementally rising from understanding the main terms of the game. The first time it is played, to realizing the main ideas of the story, when the player is familiarized with the game's world, to reaching the hidden meanings of some statements made by the fictional characters when the player has become completely involved with that game and ending with a semi- encompassing comprehension of minute linguistic details in these games. Some of the participants, S1, A1 and A2, resorted to, in later years, video game magazines, online forums or even creating a Whatsapp group to get tips and tricks about a specific game. The interaction that takes place among the members of that forum or Whatsapp group is occurring in English the entire time. The point here is that when the player wants to achieve a specific goal pertaining to the game, such as reflecting on the experience of playing it, or reading about others' reflections, expert video gamers' reviews, ideas of killing a foe and etc., the comprehensive input is moving gradually from +1 (acquainting oneself with the games world, e.g., character names, prologue, etc.) to +2 (gaining more information about the plot of the game, the background stories of the game's protagonists) to +3 (complete immersion in the game's world) where the instructions of the game have become an inseperable part of the gamer himself.

In essence, three principal phases played a vital role in triggering and enhancing the gamer's language. One is the quality of the game itself. The game's quality is mainly determined by its popularity among the video gamers, which will make it known to the majority of them and attracts others who heard about it as well as the game's advertisment campaigns. The greater the game's quality is, the greater the player's involvement in the game would be, and if the game's quality is great enough, it will prompt the gamer to play it again. Then the recurrence of the game's game play which results in an increase of the comprehensive input will take place, and finally, the game-related complementaries such as online forums, magazines, walkthroughs and game-dedicated websites where extra information pertaining to that game's world is provided, resulting in a greater level of comprehensive input that surpasses the game's language and enables the gamer to learn how to " troll at forums" according to A1 or reading the game's manual and go over a game's walkthrough to learn how to reach the next level, giving the gamer a good chance of exposing oneself to how to write essays and reviews of different kinds.

The Affective Filter Hypothesis

Johnson (2004) cited Krashen's (1985, p. 3) position that there is "a mental block that prevents acquirers from fully utilizing the comprehensible input they receive for language acquisition", and it is called the Affective Filter. Summarily speaking, the filter spoken of is a virtual barrier within the learner's mind, when the barrier is "up" the linguistic input, even if it is comprehended, will not settle in the leaarner's mind, and that is due to different factors such as fear, anxiety, dearth of self- confidence and etc., but when the barrier is "down" the settling of the linguistic input will be completed and the comprehensible input will take form.

When basing the experiences of the participants with video games, which they play for pure enjoyment, against the premise of this hypothesis, it is clear that the gamers are playing the game out of their own free "will" without any kind of anxiety or lack of

self- confidence taking place. It is deduceable that the "affective filter" is at its lowest while the players are involved with their game, and the process of the gamers' acquisition of English as a second language is occurring without obstruction.

Conclusion

The paper's purpose in the first place was to confirm whether or not video games can influence the acquisition of English as a second language. The paper owes all of its findings to the focus group discussion that was carried out using a social network application specifically made for smart phones and tablets. It has been confirmed that the acquisition of the language via video games is natural due to the fact that motivation is stemming from within the gamers themselves and not being gained from an external incentive, especially when playing is a choice, and not a job. The interview substantiated that the gamers' second language developed as a result of constant exposure to video games, the majority of which are presented via English as the medium of communication between the gamers and the game itself. The interview also concluded that Video gamers improvised their own ways in understanding and mastering different aspects of the second language such as guessing the meanings of new words or using dictionaries and notebooks or even joining online communities to expand their understanding of the game and, unintentiaonlly, the second language.

Eventhough the interview gave video game- related insights about the second language acquisition process, it can not be gurnnated that whoever plays video games is going to master the second language as an outcome, since there have been cases such as that of those who played music video games (deHaan, Reed, & Kuwada, 2010) and, according to the study itself, could not acquire the same rate of vocabulary as the ones who only watched the game while being played by their peers.

It was also noticed that, although they managed to complete the video game, some youngsters' second language did not develop, because, hypothetically speaking, they were immersed in the gameplay and did not concern themselves with the game's story

or tried to understand the instructions given by the game, which made their progress in the game random and disconnected in terms of language use and story interaction. Nevertheless, video games can become an effective language learning tool in schools and universities if they were designed 'right'. What the word 'right' implies is that a number of elements should form the foundation of the game's design to become as involving as commercial/ console video games such as Metal Gear Solid or Grand Theft Auto. These elements include action- packed gameplay, a compelling story that addresses serious issues such as violence, adult- related situations, beyond reproach- voice acting and etc.

Some of the participants shed some light on why learning- specific video games did not receive the same kind of popularity as the commercial ones. A2 said " I'd ask you one question. Are adult- rated games going to be part of local education someday?", while S1 justified these video games' failure to achieve success to the fact that they were " boring, very amateur, mostly unrecognizable characters, horrible voice- acting, horrible animation and overly- excited announcer".

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